

To implement our mission and achieve our strategic goals, we will strive to uphold a set of core values that represent the basic fabric of our organizational culture. These values transcend all organizational boundaries and apply to everything we do as *One VA*. Each member of the VA team endeavors to practice the following values when serving veterans and working with others.

### Respect and Commitment

- Veterans have earned our respect and commitment. We direct our efforts toward meeting their needs.
- We believe that integrity, fairness, and respect must be the hallmarks of our interactions.

### Open Communication

- We are committed to open, accurate, and timely communication with veterans, employees, and external stakeholders.
- We listen to the concerns and views of veterans, employees, and external stakeholders to bring about improvements in the programs and services we provide.

### Excellence in Services, Programs, and People

- We continually strive to meet or exceed service delivery expectations of veterans and their families by delivering accurate, timely, and courteous service and benefits in an effective, efficient manner.
- We are committed to improving access for veterans and their families through facility location and design, as well as innovative uses of information technology.
- We perform at the highest level of competence and take pride in our accomplishments.
- We are open to change and value a culture where everyone is involved, accountable, respected, and appreciated.
- We value teamwork and cooperation — operating as *One VA* to deliver world-class, seamless service to veterans and their families.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is fully committed to achieving the strategic goals and near-term priorities contained in this document. In this 21st Century, our Nation will improve our ability to honor its commitment to veterans. The premise for this pronouncement is sustained by our Nation's rich history of honoring veterans for their service and sacrifices they have made.

When President Bush introduced Mr. Principi as his nominee for Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on December 29, 2000, he set the tone for his administration's support of our Nation's veterans with the following remarks:

*During my campaign, I pledged that we would honor our veterans just as they have honored our country. I also pledged that veterans would have an advocate leading the Department of Veterans Affairs.*

*My choice for that position, Tony Principi, will serve Americans who have served our country. Tony is well known amongst the veterans. After all, he is a highly decorated veteran — Vietnam War veteran.*

*I am asking him to take the lead in modernizing the veterans' health care system, so all our veterans are treated with dignity. Tony understands that one of our goals will be to make sure that claims will be processed faster.*

*And the VA will return to the basic principle that it has a duty to assist veterans who are seeking benefits. In my administration, veterans will have a strong and constant ally, not only in the President, but also in the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.*

As a member of the President's Cabinet, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, with the support of all VA employees, will continue as the principal advocate for veterans. The Department will ensure that veterans' issues are discussed at all levels of the United States Government, and the prospective mix of services and benefits delivered by VA will be based on the needs and expectations of veterans and their families.

To the men and women in uniform — past, present, and future — the Department of Veterans Affairs will always be here for you. This is our pledge.

For further information about VA's Strategic Plan, please contact: Department of Veterans Affairs

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